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ARANCIO AND ARANCIA

Managing Editor, MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL:

In Professor Austin's review of our *L'Italia* in the MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL for October, 1921, occurs this sentence (page 49): "But on page 9, in line 5, why is it stated that Italy is a large exporter of 'gli aranci?'—did orange *trees* figure so notably?"

Professor Austin is wrong in thinking that *arancio* is used only of the tree. The two multi-volume Italian dictionaries, that of the Crusca and that of Tommaseo and Bellini, both give examples of *arancio* in the sense of the fruit. Rigutini and Fanfani say, *s.v.* *Arancio*: "Si dice anche del Frutto stesso; ma più comunem. *Arancia*." Petrocchi, on the other hand, says, *s.v.* *Arancio*: "Pianta da giardino che da frutti saporiti giallo dorati che ànno le stesso nome," and *s.v.* *Arancia*: "Frutto dell' arancio. Comun. *Aràncio*." Furthermore, the passage referred to in *L'Italia* concerns oranges as an item of export; and in commercial statements the masculine plural form *aranci* is the usual form.

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Managing Editor, MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL:

Recently I read that the "Man in the Iron Mask" was the first to note that there are as many letters in the French names of the playing cards in a suit as there are cards in an entire pack. Upon experimenting, I found this to be true in English also. To illustrate: French,—*as, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept, huit, neuf, dix, valet, reine* (not *dame*), *roi*=52 letters; English—*ace, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, jack, queen, king*=52 letters. It should be noted that the "Man in the Iron Mask" must have used *reine*, and not *dame*, which is now much the commoner name for the card.

This is certainly a curious coincidence. We are often told that the pack of cards represents the year, the four suits represent the seasons, the thirteen cards in a suit correspond to the lunar months, and the fifty-two cards to the weeks of the year. This may have a symbolic meaning, but how does one explain the fact that in both French and English the names of the cards have just as many letters as there are cards?

In this connection there is another curious fact. Although there are only forty-eight cards in a Spanish pack, the Spanish names also have fifty-two letters, if we count *ch* and *ll* as having two letters each: *as, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, sota, caballo, rey*=52 letters.

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